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BANARAS

# new horizons for rural development



**A**GRICULTURE has been the mainstay of India's economy; 80 per cent of the people in the country depend on agriculture and half the country's national income is derived from this source. India lives in villages and it is the farmer who has borne the brunt from olden days. Therefore, the upliftment of peasantry and the speedy development of rural India is vital for our alround development.

India has been fortunate in touching a new record of over 118 million tonnes of foodgrains production coupled with higher growth in other sectors of economy, which has poised our country for a major economic expansion.

Prime Minister, Smt. Indira Gandhi laid greater emphasis in 20-point economic programme on this aspect, when she observed that immediate steps be taken to mitigate the hardships of rural poor for changing the face of rural India to the maximum advantage of the country.

This programme needs multi-dimentional efforts with particular emphasis on the development and conservation of natural resources like land and water to raise the living standard of the peasants. The

main task is to give attention to all aspects of rural development including Community Development and Panchayati Raj, special projects for the betterment of weaker section of the rural community like small and marginal farmers, development of drought-prone, tribal and hilly areas, and for man power planning and employment. Agricultural credit and marketing including quality control and regulated markets are also essential.

More than all these, Prime Minister has rightly laid down that implementation of measures to impose ceiling on agricultural land holdings and speedier distribution of surplus land and compilation of land records should be given top priority. Besides, speedy action has to be taken for making provision for low cost housing sites for the landless, homeless and weaker sections of the rural community. The chronic malady of rural indebtedness has to be wiped out by legislation for fixing moratorium on recovery of debts. The Prime Minister also emphasised that the legislation be brought forward to fix minimum agricultural wages to bring them in line with cost of living indices. It was also laid down that 5 million more hectares of land be brought under irrigation alongwith a national programme for tapping underground sources of water.

It is gratifying to note that in a short span of over a year and a half, Government measures both at the Centre and in the States have achieved satisfactory results. These efforts, however, will have to be continued for transforming the rural scene for a better tomorrow.

### **Integrated Development**

In March, 1976 The Union Finance Minister presented a Special Paper on "Strategy for Integrated Rural Development" along with the Budget document for the year 1976-77. The Paper gave details of a rural development programme directed towards making optimum use of available local resources through purposive inputs of science and technology for the benefit of the rural poor. As a result of this initiative, it was decided to make a start with an *ad hoc* provision of Rs. 150 million in the Union Budget for funding pilot projects under integrated rural development. Subsequently, a Working Group was set up to select at least one district in each

State for initiating the project. Twenty districts in the country have since been selected. Coordination at the national level will be dealt with by a Central Committee.

As in the case of Community Development Programme, youth and women have been assigned a vital role in the successful implementation of the rural development programme. Because of their drive, energy and progressive ideas, they will be catalysts in taking science and technology to the rural masses. They will form the core of progressive elements in rural India and help in the implementation of programmes for uplifting the weaker sections of society. Formation of youth clubs and Mahila Mandals and making them viable units for the job is an important task of the Department, which recently created a Cell for women's activities in Community Development blocks. The Cell's main objective would be to harness the dormant strength of the women folk in the country and channelise it for country's reconstruction in social and economic spheres.

Similarly, the Nutrition Programme is enlisting the support of the rural community, particularly its youth for implementing quick growing fruit trees plantation programme in villages. Nutritious fruits will add to the dishes of expectant and nursing mothers and needy children for whom the programme is meant.

A significant step taken at the instance of the Union Minister for Agriculture & Irrigation is to entrust the industrial and mercantile houses bring about their active and meaningful involvement and participation in developmental activities. Quite a few of these houses are already engaged in developmental activities in the rural areas.

### **Community Development and Panchayati Raj**

The Community Development programme which was launched on October 1952 was aimed at for over-all development of rural India covering resources and cultural and economic aspects of the Community life. Today, there are 5026 Community Development Blocks in the country. The approved Fifth Plan outlay under the

Community Development and Panchayati Raj sectors to all the States/Union Territories is of the order of Rs. 1298 million. An outlay of Rs. 136.5 million has been approved for the year 1975-76 on agricultural development. Panchayat Samities, numbering 4015 and 262 Zila Parishads are functioning in the country. There are also 200 training centres in India to impart training to different categories of rural development personnel.

A new scheme called "Promotion of Voluntary Action" has been included for implementation in the Fifth Plan. Total Plan outlay for the scheme is Rs. 13.9 million. The programme under the scheme include various measures for promotion of associate organisations such as developing a type of model organisation introducing simplified system of registration for rural voluntary groups, helping them to undertake definite activities. During the Fourth Five Year Plan, the Government launched two schemes, Small Farmers Development Agencies and Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labourers Development Agencies for the benefit of weaker sections comprising small and marginal farmers and agricultural labourers. Under the Fifth Five Year Plan all the SFDA/MFAL projects have been made composite and the total number of SFDA/MFAL projects has been raised to 160 including the existing 87 projects. The total plan allocation of Rs. 1750 million has been made for these schemes. The emphasis is being laid on integrated area development with focus on crop husbandry and other supporting programmes like minor irrigation and land development and animal husbandry programme like Dairy, Poultry, Piggery and Sheep rearing.

The drought-prone areas programme was also started in 1970-71 with an out-lay of Rs. 1000 million. The objective was to take up work of permanent nature in sectors of irrigation, soil conservation, afforestation and roads on which further development would be programmed. Scheme with an estimated cost of Rs. 1118.1 million was sanctioned.

During the Fifth Plan the emphasis on the DPAP has been laid on integrated rural development in agriculture and allied sectors

and an amount of Rs. 1810 million has been provided in the Fifth Plan for the programme. An amount of Rs. 1614 million is to be provided by the State Governments besides institutional credit to the tune of about Rs. 1397 million to be spent in 74 selected drought-prone districts during the Fifth Plan. The programme is expected to benefit about 0.7 million house-holds of small and marginal farmers and is expected to bring irrigation to 0.3 million hectares.

In the past few years, agricultural credit policy has been liberalised to benefit the poorer sections of the rural population. This covers the imposing of moratorium on the liquidation of rural indebtedness. It is a major item in the 20 point economic programme.

The Government has also launched a scheme of Regional Rural Banks to meet the credit needs of the farmers. The function of these banks differ from those of the commercial banks. Their area of operation is limited to a particular region comprising one or more districts. These banks are granting loans and advances particularly to small and marginal farmers and agricultural labourers and to the rural artisans, small entrepreneurs and persons of modest means neglected in trade and other productive activities. Out of 60 Regional Rural Banks, 40 have already been set up. It is decided to set up 10 more such banks within two months.

To ensure that growers get prices according to quality of produce, crediting was introduced under the Agricultural Produce (Crediting and Marketing Act) to keep up the standard of crediting under Agmark. More Laboratories for Scientific testings are being constructed.

Rural India is today humming with developmental activities. More roads are being built, more schools are being established, more cooperative societies are being set up to ameliorate the economic condition of the rural people. The fact is that the announcement of 20 point economic programme by the Prime Minister has put a new spirit in the rural people, removed their inertia of thought and action and has created a team spirit among them to be partners in India's nation building programmes.

## **Land Reforms and Ceiling Laws**

Implementation of measures to impose ceiling on agricultural land holdings and speedier distribution of surplus land with more efficient compilation of land records forms a very important part of Prime Minister's 20-Point Economic Programme. These measures are of fundamental importance for the revitalisation of the rural economy and to increase agricultural production. For this, a necessary legislative action has been completed and greater emphasis is being now laid on the implementation in the field of land reforms and for imposing ceilings on agricultural land holdings.

After the announcement of the 20-Point Economic Programme, the implementation of land reforms and other programmes concerning the rural sector were discussed at the Conference of Chief Ministers' in March 1976. The main recommendations were:

- (i) Inclusion of State laws in the IX Schedule and examination of further constitutional and legal measures necessary to insulate land reform laws from judicial review;
- (ii) Strengthening of the administrative and judicial machinery to ensure time-bound implementation;
- (iii) Examination of legal measures necessary for severely restricting, if not altogether dispensing with, benami transactions;
- (iv) Examination of the present procedures with a view to simplifying them and making them more effective;
- (v) Sample surveys and random spot checking in the field of the work done;
- (vi) Enactment of legislation, wherever necessary for recording the rights of tenants etc. without waiting for completion of survey and resettlement operations. Some provision for mutation should be made where it does not exist;
- (vii) Examination of procedures for resettlement and resurvey of the land with a view to curtailing the time taken;

(viii) Enactment of legislation for restoration of illegally occupied community land.

It is gratifying to note that the action on the recommendations is being taken expeditiously and with greater efficiency at the Centre as well as in the States. Steps have been taken to involve public representatives in the implementation of the land reforms in different States. In States like Karnataka, Maharashtra, etc. statutory bodies with public representatives have been set up for this purpose.

In the changing socio-economic and political context, renewed efforts were made at implementing land ceiling measures from the late sixties. These led to the laying down of a new national policy on land ceiling which was evolved on the recommendations of the Chief Ministers' Conference held in July, 1972. The main features of this policy were a considerably lowered ceiling for a family of five; very few exemptions from the ceiling; the provision for payment of compensation to the former land owners at considerably lower rates than the market rates so that the allottees of surplus land could pay them over a period of years without any difficulty; the retrospective application of the laws so that various transactions in land done by landowners with a view to evading or avoiding the effects of the impending ceiling could be set at naught and a clear announcement that most of the surplus land would be distributed to landless agricultural workers, particularly those who belonged to the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes.

By now, all the States in the country have enacted laws fully reflecting this policy. Only Nagaland and Meghalaya do not have land ceiling laws as there is community ownership of land in these two States. Steps are being taken to bring the Sikkim land reforms measures in line with the national pattern. In order to insulate the current ceiling measures from challenge in the courts of law, provision has been made for barring the jurisdiction of civil courts in regard to disputes that may arise from the implementation of these laws. Most of the laws have been placed in the Ninth Schedule of the Constitution which places them beyond any challenge in the

courts of law on grounds of alleged infringement of fundamental rights.

By now, 2.908 million acres of land have been declared surplus as a result of the implementation of this new set of laws. About 1.670 million acres have been actually taken over by the State; a little about 1.05 million acres have so far been distributed among 0.68 million allottees. The work of implementation is still in progress; more land is expected to be available shortly.

Earlier after independence, land reforms measures were initiated in the country. The main objects were:

- (a) The abolition of the intermediary system that prevailed between the State and the tiller of the soil;
- (b) Conferment of ownership rights on the cultivating tenants in the land held under their possession;
- (c) To fix ceilings on agricultural land holdings. To eliminate parasitic existence on land for landlords who contributed nothing to agriculture but lived on the labour of tenants, sharecroppers and agricultural workers;
- (d) To rationalise the record of rights on land. To protect the rights of tenants etc.
- (e) Consolidation of holdings. To apply modern techniques of agriculture and utilising the dependable irrigation facilities.

### **Abolition of intermediary tenures**

By now the intermediary tenures in land, known variously as zamindaris, jagirdaris, inams, etc. have been abolished almost all over the country. More than 20 million tenants and subinfeudatories have been brought in direct contact with the State. In addition, approximately, 16 million acres of waste, fallow and other categories of land have vested in the State.

### **Tenancy Reforms Measures**

While the intermediary system removed top most layer of parasites on land, it did not realise the ultimate goal of policy,

namely, bringing the land to the actual tiller of the soil. The idea was the tenancy should immediately be so rationalised as to make the tenant feel secure making his tenure permanent, transferable and heritable.

Since the conferment of ownership rights in land on the tillers of the soil would not come about everywhere immediately and even after the realisation of this objective there would be a residue of the tenancy system, the planners laid down the ingredients of the security of tenure as follows:

- (i) The rent payable by the cultivating tenant to the landlord should be so fixed as not to exceed  $\frac{1}{5}$ th to  $\frac{1}{4}$ th of the gross produce.
- (ii) No tenant should be evicted except according to the law which would specify the grounds of eviction. These grounds in the main were non-payment of rent and abuse of the land in the manner that might impair its productivity and usefulness.
- (iii) Declaration of the rights of tenants in the land as permanent, heritable and transferable.

To achieve results legislative measures have been taken throughout the country. The maximum rates of rent have been fixed at levels not exceeding those noted above in all the States except Punjab, Haryana, Tamil Nadu and the Andhra area of Andhra Pradesh. In Punjab and Haryana fair rent is  $33\frac{1}{3}$  per cent of the gross produce; in Tamil Nadu it varies from  $33\frac{1}{3}$  per cent to 40 per cent of the gross produce. In Andhra Pradesh the fair rent varies between 25 per cent to 30 per cent of the gross produce. Everywhere in the country the law regulates the conditions under which only a tenant can be evicted from the land. The right of resumption, exercisable by landlords within a limited period, has now expired almost all over the country: it exists in a limited form in Assam, Bihar, Haryana and Punjab. In West Bengal, the land held by sharecroppers is resumable by the landlord up to a maximum of 3 hectares including the land held otherwise by the landlord. But,

before exercising this right, a minimum of 1 hectare of land is to be left to the sharecroppers as absolutely non-resumable. Steps are being taken for the complete abolition of these last vestiges of the right of resumption.

More than a dozen States have enacted laws conferring ownership rights on the cultivating tenants. Notable among them are Maharashtra, Gujarat, Kerala, Karnataka, Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa. In three or four other States, the tenants have been given the optional right to purchase the land held under their cultivation by paying to the landlord a premium that is fixed by the appropriate authority according to the terms of the law. Everywhere the premium is so fixed as not to be beyond the paying capacity of the tenant. Steps are being taken for persuading all the remaining States to enact laws automatically conferring ownership rights on the cultivating tenants.

While it is difficult to assess the extent of work done by way of implementation of the legislative measures noted above, it is reasonable to say that in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Kerala, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu & Kashmir the system of tenancy has for all practical purposes been abolished. A great deal of work has been done in most of the remaining States. One cannot make a precise estimate of the number of tenants who have acquired ownership rights in the land held under their personal cultivation. However, data collected so far indicate that around 4 million tenants have come to acquire ownership rights over 3.7 million hectares of land.

### **Consolidation of Holdings**

By now more than a quarter of the cultivable land in the country has been consolidated (a little over 34 million hectares). In Punjab, Haryana and Western Uttar Pradesh, the work is complete. Legislative measures for consolidation of holdings, either on a voluntary or compulsory basis, have been undertaken in most States of the country. However, care is taken that before consolidation operations are undertaken in any area, the record of rights is rationalised.

Unless this is done, tenants and share-croppers will be rendered all the more insecure.

### **Distribution of Waste Land, Fallow Land etc.**

Alongwith the measures outlined above, the States and Union Territories have gone on distributing large tracts of waste, fallow and other categories of land that can with some effort be brought under the plough. It is estimated that more than 6.5 million hectares have thus been distributed over the past 15-20 years.

### **Provision for House Sites**

In States like Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab, Rajasthan, U.P., Chandigarh and Delhi, the work of providing house sites to landless has been completed. There is no problem of house sites in Manipur, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Daman & Diu, Lakshadweep and Mizoram. In the States where the problem exists 7.1 million house sites have been allotted to the landless and weaker section.

The allotment of land to landless is to be followed by construction of houses. Most of the States have taken up schemes for development of these house sites and have provision of facilities like free or subsidised forest materials, rights to mine for construction materials like Bajri, sand and stone etc. in Government land. Some States have been providing loans to the allottees through their housing co-operatives for construction purposes. Some States have also taken up ambitious scheme for construction of houses. Kerala is continuing its one-lakh house programme. Orissa has drawn up the programme for construction of half a million houses for a period of five years. Maharashtra has undertaken construction of sample huts for all the allottees. As a result of these efforts, over 329,000 houses have so far been constructed. In U.P., it is reported that 18 per cent of the 1.2 million persons to whom house sites have been allotted have already constructed houses. To prevent unauthorised eviction of persons already in possession of homestead lands, state Governments and Union Territories have also undertaken to review their laws with a view to provide confirmment of full ownership rights on home-

stead tenants according to the guidelines issued by the Central Government.

### **Removal of Rural Indebtedness**

All States in which the problem of rural indebtedness exists have undertaken legislation for imposing a moratorium on debt in line with the guidelines issued by the Government of India in August 1975. These guidelines provide that

- (i) A moratorium should be imposed for a period of one year with enabling provision for extension of period and as when necessary. The intention was that suitable action including legislation for liquidation of debt may be undertaken during the period of moratorium;
- (ii) The moratorium may not cover any sum due to the Government or a bank or a cooperative society or a local statutory authority or the LIC or any sum recoverable as public demand. Demand also includes certain other items such as liability arising out of breach of trust or law in respect of wages or remuneration or in respect of maintenance of any land due in respect of any property let out to a debtor, and
- (iii) Moratorium on debt be restricted to landless labour, marginal and small farmer and rural artisan.

Some States like Himachal Pradesh, Orissa, and U.P., have also sought to regulate the money lending business by making compulsory the registration of money lenders and by fixing the maximum rate of interest to be charged by them.

The legislative action for moratorium and redemption of debt has to be followed by establishment of alternate sources of credit. This will obviously take some time. It has been stressed upon by the States that the schemes for liquidation of debt should be practicable and should not be such as to lead to the complete drying up of the existing credit channels.

States have taken steps to gear up their cooperative institutions. In Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, U.P., and Rajasthan,

a large number of persons belonging to the weaker sections of society, the new allottees of surplus land and freed bonded labourers have been enrolled as members. Maharashtra has enrolled 1.66 million small and marginal farmers as members. Money has been advanced to such persons to enable them to pay the share capital. In an effort to achieve 100 per cent cooperative coverage of agricultural families, U.P. has provided Rs. 50 million for advancing such loans to the new allottees of land. In certain States, a percentage of loan by cooperative institutions has been reserved for these sections and their adequate representation on the boards of management has been statutorily ensured.

In a letter to the Chief Ministers, the Prime Minister drew attention to the need for organising the Cooperatives on a sound footing with broad-based membership and for mobilisation of deposits.

The question of alternate sources of credit was considered at the Chief Ministers' Conference in March 1976. The Conference felt that commercial banks, regional rural banks and Cooperatives should not only be geared up to fill up the credit gaps, but their lending policies should be liberalised to meet the more important consumption requirements of the beneficiaries. A group was appointed to look into this question and make recommendations. The first report of the group has been received and is under consideration.

### **Fixing Minimum Agricultural Wages**

Minimum agricultural wages have been reviewed by all States and wages have been enhanced in most States. Steps have also been taken to strengthen the administrative arrangements for implementation of minimum wages. In most States staff of the Development Blocks and the Revenue Departments have also been involved along with the Labour Department in implementation of minimum wages.

States have taken steps to gear up the administrative machinery—in some States separate Directorates of Agricultural Labour have

been set up and inspectors have been appointed in areas where the wages are specifically depressed. A large number of cases of violation has come to notice and action is being taken. In Orissa, 7,758 cases came to notice and 1,624 prosecutions were filed. Of these, 1,058 cases have been decided and fines totalling Rs. 85,000 were imposed. Rs. 163,000 of short paid wages were realised from the defaulting persons. Penal action has also been taken in Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh.

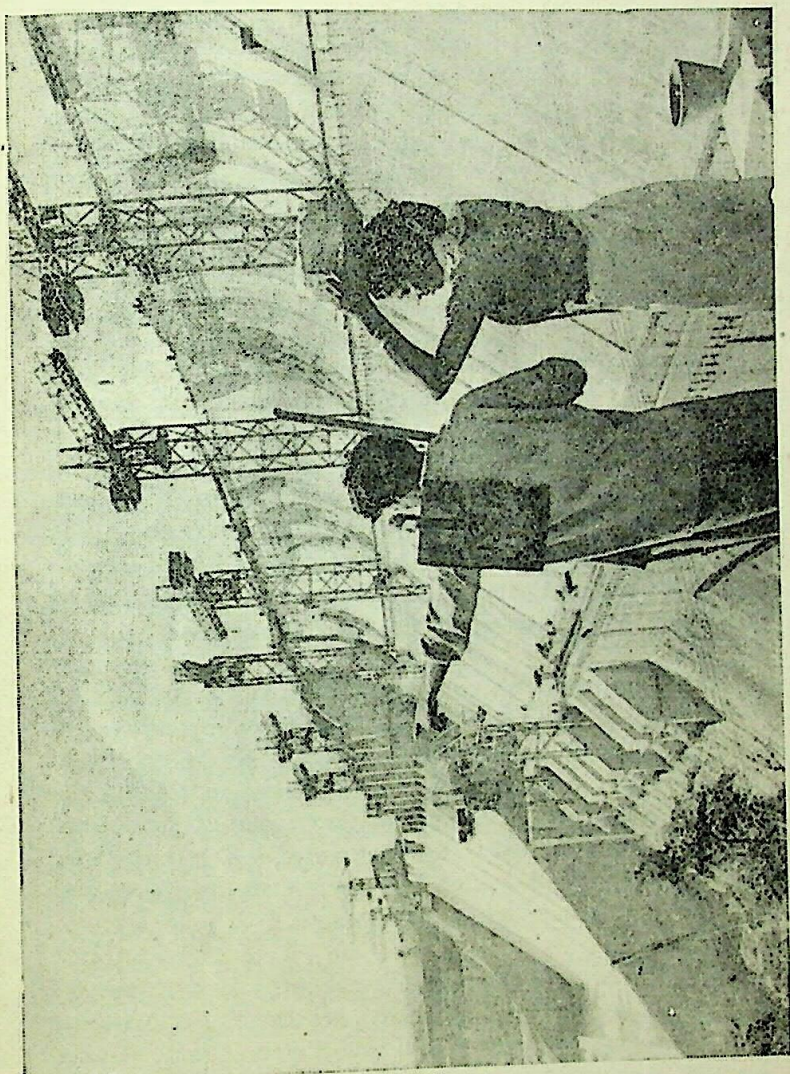
### **Development of Irrigation Potential**

India's dependence on the vagaries of monsoon for its agricultural production is proverbial. Not only rainfall is limited to four monsoon months but it is very unevenly distributed in respect of both space and time over the country. The only means to minimise this dependence is to make the country self-sufficient to meet the requirements of food and fibre for its rising population.

Irrigation was, therefore, given a high priority in the country's development programmes. Since the inception of the Plan period in 1951, 115 major and 610 medium irrigation schemes were taken up to March 1976, of which, 32 major and 410 medium schemes have been completed. A number of minor irrigation schemes were also taken up during this period. This enabled raising the irrigation potential which was 22.6 million ha. in 1951 to about 46 million ha. by March 1975. The ultimate irrigation potential is assessed as 107 million ha. The development of irrigation, however, in the country is highly uneven.

Development of irrigation formed a major item of the 20-Point Economic Programme announced by the Prime Minister. The programme envisages creation for additional irrigation potential of 5 million ha. through major and medium irrigation schemes during the last four years of the Fifth Plan i.e. 1975-76 to 1978-79.

To achieve such a high target calls for careful planning at all levels. Immediately on the commencement of the 20-Point Programme, the performance of the earlier plans was reviewed in



**More Power and irrigation potential—Nagarjunsagar Dam**

detail and several measures for effective implementation of the programme decided. One of the important decisions taken was that necessary inputs be provided and priority be given to complete ongoing projects to derive maximum benefits. Priority irrigation projects have been identified and their implementation has been accelerated by providing additional funds. During 1975-76, an advance Plan assistance of Rs. 558 million were provided to 18 selected projects in 12 States. This enabled creation of additional irrigation potential of 0.27 million ha. during the year. Consequently, the irrigation potential of 1.05 million ha. was created during 1975-76 which is double the average annual rate of development during the Fourth Plan period.

A review of the reasons of shortfall during the Plan period in achieving the laid down targets was found to be lack of adequate monitoring and evaluation inputs. It was decided to set up monitoring organisations at Project, State and Central levels. The constant monitoring by the Central Unit, which has since been set up, enabled realisation of the additional benefit of 0.27 million ha. during the year 1975-76. It has since been decided in consultation with the Planning Commission to monitor the progress of 25 major ongoing projects by Central Monitoring Organisation.

Since irrigation facilities are being created at enormous cost, it is necessary that the available water resources are utilised in efficient manner to derive maximum benefits. An Expert Team has been constituted to recommend steps necessary to improve the operation of the existing Schemes. Greater emphasis is being laid on conjunctive use of ground and surface water, which would help not only in maximising irrigation benefits but also in minimising the hazards due to water logging and flooding.

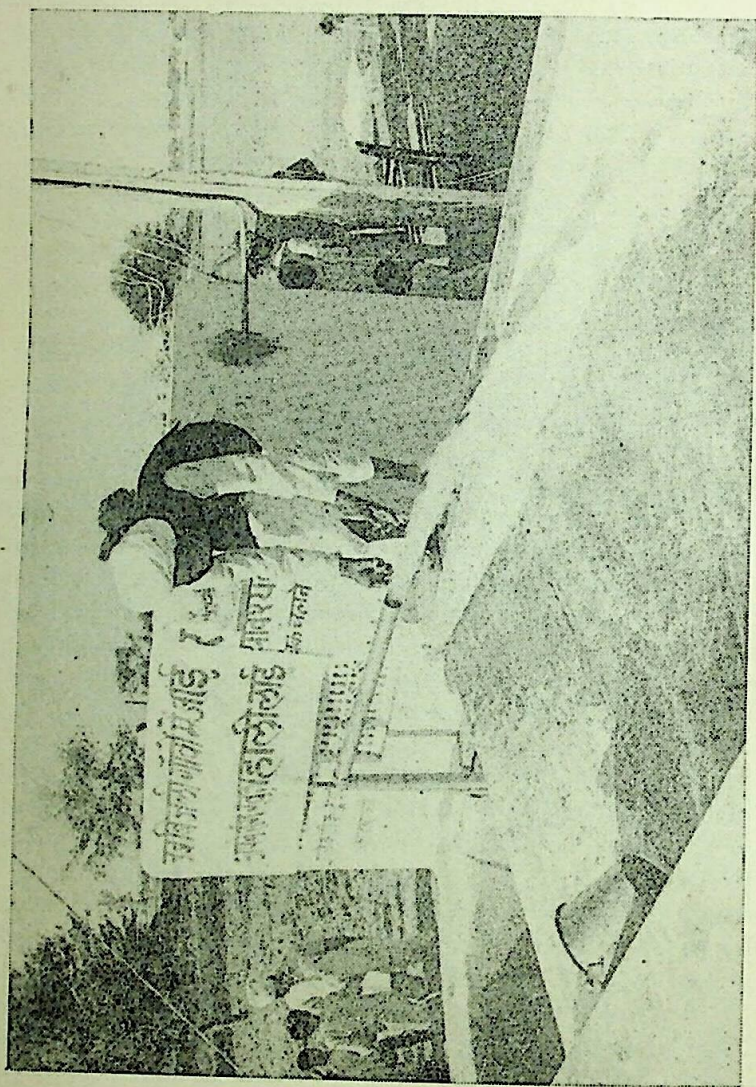
There is also a large programme for development of the command areas of large projects. 51 such areas have been identified and these are being developed with provision of field channels, land shaping and drainage where necessary, and other infra-structure facilities such as farm roads, etc. Another priority programme relates to modernisation of old irrigation systems to meet the needs of modern

agriculture. A start has been made and this programme is expected to gain momentum in the near future.

Clearance of large number of projects had been held up due to inter-State differences. Attempts have, therefore, been stepped up during last two years to resolve disputes by negotiations. An agreement among the States concerned in the Godavari Basin, namely, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Orissa was reached in December, 1975 whereby States agreed to take up several projects as joint schemes for 2300 TMC out of 3000 TMC of Godavari waters. This will enable clearance of all pending projects in the Godavari Basin and enable creation of additional irrigation potential to the extent of 5 million ha. Agreement was reached with regard to construction of Rajghat project by Madhya Pradesh and U.P. and the Betwa River Board Act was enacted by President in April 1976.

The Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal submitted its further report giving its final order on 27th May, 1976. It would now enable clearance of large number of projects in the Krishna Basin which would provide additional irrigation potential of 1.2 million ha. The Government of India also gave its decision on allocation of waters between Haryana and Punjab as a result of Beas project. This will enable clearance of pending projects of Punjab and Haryana to utilise their share of waters.

As indicated above, a potential of 1 million ha. has already been created in the first year of the four year programme of 5 million ha. The State Governments have envisaged an outlay of Rs. 6150 million during 1976-77 to create an additional potential of 1 million ha. Centre has decided that the outlay on major and medium irrigation should be increased by Rs. 752 million, and has agreed to give advance Plan assistance of Rs. 481 million during this year for accelerating the progress of selected irrigation projects. Efforts are thus being made to increase the tempo of development and realise the benefits of 1.2 million ha. in the current year. Detailed project-wise programmes have also been chalked out so that the balance potential is created in the remaining two years.



More Water for Farms

## **Groundwater potential**

Groundwater Development which forms the bulk of the minor irrigation programme has a vital role in increasing irrigation potential. As far as groundwater development is concerned, the utilisation of public sector funds is largely confined to such items as purchase of drilling equipment, cost of staff, construction of public tubewells, contribution to share capital and advances of Tubewell Corporations and extending subsidy to small farmers for construction of private wells. The bulk of the outlay for private irrigation works and also the works executed by the Minor Irrigation Corporations is mobilised from the institutional sources. Apart from public sector funds, minor irrigation programmes are financed under the Special Central Sponsored schemes like SFDA, DPAP, Tribal and Hill Area Development, Integrated Tribal Development, etc.

## **Measures to accelerate progress**

Under the 20-Point Economic Programme efforts are being made to accelerate minor irrigation programme to the maximum extent possible to ensure that additional potential created from minor irrigation sources during the Fifth Plan should exceed 6 million hectares even after allowing for some over estimation of potential and slippage in the performance. To achieve this objective monitoring arrangements at the Central and the State levels are being strengthened. Concerted efforts are being made to:

- (a) increase the investment on the programme
- (b) identify and remove bottlenecks and constraints in accelerated implementation of the programme
- (c) achieve close coordination with rural electrification and other special programmes such as DPAP, SFDA, ITD, etc. and;
- (d) improve the technical standards and practices followed in the surveys planning design and construction of minor irrigation works.

Concrete measures taken for vigorous planning and implementation of the programme since inception of the 20-Point Economic Programme include:

- (i) Setting up of a Cell at the Central level for active monitoring of the programme. Meanwhile two Central Teams have been constituted to monitor the progress of ground water development in the Eastern States where there is yet considerable scope for expansion.
- (ii) Central Teams recently visited 11 states to review minor irrigation and rural electrification programme. These teams have pin pointed the constraints coming in the way for expeditious utilisation of institutional investment and energisation of pumpsets and suggested means for overcoming the constraints.
- (iii) A Centrally sponsored scheme has been introduced under which 50 per cent matching grants are made available for strengthening State organisations responsible for minor irrigation in specific critical areas disciplines.
- (iv) The activities of the Central Ground Water Board have been stepped up in order to provide increased technical support to the programme of Ground Water Development. The Board has drawn up a programme for covering an additional area of about 5 lakh square kms under systematic hydrogeological survey during the 5th Five Year Plan (Area covered till the end of Fourth Five Year Plan is 11 lakhs square kms.—progress of last 25 years).

It is expected that with the increased investments in the next two years, the target of 5 million hectares in the Fifth Plan would be substantially exceeded.

### **Tree Plantation Programme**

One of the 5 points announced by Youth Congress lays great stress on plantation of trees. The importance of tree planting needs hardly to be emphasised as their usefulness is well known. Trees help in creating a healthy environment, save soil erosion and prevent floods. Trees also attract rains and thereby prevent droughts and protect the crops. One of the most important aspect of trees is that they constitute a basic natural resource of vital economic importance.



**Shri Om Mehta, Minister of State for Home Affairs, planting a Sapling**

Vast areas in the country have been laid bare of vegetation. For example, the Western Ghats, the Western Himalayan ranges, the Eastern Himalayas and the enormous expanse of the Indo-Gangetic plain may be cited where forests have shrunk to relatively small pockets here and there. The scarcity of this causes great damage bringing in floods, famine, scarcity of fodder, fuel and most of other commodities of everyday use.

### **Action Plan**

It should be everybody's endeavour to plant trees to make India green and a programme has been chalked out in this regard for the next five years. To achieve results the entire resources of the country are being mobilised and the programme is being executed through the active cooperation of village agencies, corporate bodies, individuals and Government Departments who have capacity to contribute substantially towards the success of this massive tree planting programme. There are a number of corporate bodies and institutions which have been addressed to give required need and support in this direction.

Most of the States and Union Territories in the country are vigorously pursuing the drive for tree plantation. The following table records the achievements of various States and Union Territories:

The youth of the country can play important role to help in this nation building activity. It is proposed to set up "Tree Clubs" in every district for motivating the people to come forward on voluntarily basis to help in this drive. To give a start to this campaign, Committees would be set up under the Chief Ministers at the State level and for coordination work under the leadership of the Deputy Commissioners. These will be the main agencies for raising funds required for the implementation of this programme. It is proposed to raise nurseries and provide seeds, cuttings and seedlings etc. to people involved in this programme. Plantable areas have to be identified through the involvement of village, Tehsil and district level organisations

<i>States/Union Territories.</i>	<i>No. of trees planted during 1976-77. (No. in Millions)</i>	<i>Planting Target fixed for 1977-78 (No. in Millions)</i>
<b>1. STATES</b>		
Andhra Pradesh	2.705	10.0
Assam	.25	30.050
Bihar	1.567	35.0
Gujarat	16.1	25.0
Haryana	4.7	20.0
Himachal Pradesh	18.0	N.A.
Jammu & Kashmir	1.526	2.30 approx.
Karnataka	8.0	—
Kerala	1.5	w.m.
Madhya Pradesh	1.0	1.50
Maharashtra	1.0	1.50
Manipur	.106	1.10
Meghalaya	.050	.10
Orissa	.173	1.0
Nagaland	.035	.150
Punjab	8.2	30.0
Rajasthan	2.94	11.50
Tamil Nadu	4.0	N.A.
Tripura	.20	.375
Uttar Pradesh	.20	100.0
West Bengal	2.421	5.0
Sikkim	.20	1.0
<b>2. UNION TERRITORIES</b>		
A & N Island	.002	N.A.
Arunachal Pradesh	—	—
D & N Haweli	.38	—
Delhi	.252	N.A.
Goa, Daman & Diu	N.A.	N.A.
Mizoram	.016	.050
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>94.448</b>	<b>275.575</b>

The Forest Departments will be primarily responsible for arranging the seeds and cuttings of species which will be required for raising the nursery stock and for distributing it to the various centres. The Extensions Organisations of the Forest Departments have to be suitably strengthened for this purpose.

Youth Organisations, Women Social Welfare Boards, Voluntary Organisations, Tree Clubs and other agencies are to contribute substantially towards the success of this programme. To monitor implementation of this programme "Tree Wardens" are to be designated who will work on voluntarily basis.





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